



The Musket

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1969



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DJ and musician Lucas Burkholder creates new beats with fellow seniors



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Elizabeth Stump, a three-sport varsity athlete, tells more about her passion for athletics.

Volume LXI Issue IV—February 1919

Schedule conversations continue after major decisions

■ Katya Ivanenko
Shashwati Sanjay
Staff Writers

Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, Lexington High School will have a new schedule. The new schedule entails 55-65 minute blocks with a six-day rotation. Class times will increase by eight to 18 minutes, depending on the day. In addition, each class will meet four times a

week with the exception of science. Overall, class time per week will increase from 192 minutes to 200 minutes, adding an extra five to six hours throughout the entire year.

"There will be an adjustment that comes with detracking from a five day schedule," Principal Andrew Stephens said.

The new class lengths could allow teachers to flesh out lesson plans, answer

more questions and allow for more exploration. However, concerns remain about student attention.

"If the blocks are too long, then it is hard to keep the attention of the students," Mr. Mixer, a freshmen Earth Science teacher, said. "They get bored easily."

Stephens addressed the reluctance to change schedules.

"One thing I would want people to understand

is that changes are a normal occurrence. It all depends on how you view it," Dr. Stephens said.

Not everyone agrees with this perspective.

"A later start time means that the day starts later so people can get out of bed later, but people get out of school later. It doesn't really make an impact because people still will have the same amount of homework and after school activities,"

Matthew Ledesma, a freshman, said.

The results of the schedule change are yet to be seen. The later start times will be implemented in the 2021-2022 school year, so classes of 2021 and 2022, current freshmen and sophomores, will be the first to experience them. Only then will the benefits and the drawbacks of the schedule change be more concrete.

Nothing says "I love you" like cheesy love bops in math class

■ Ashna Mitta
Emily Ma
Staff Writers

It's not every day that math class features a rendition of The B-52's "Love Shack".

Every year on Valentine's Day, small groups of singers are excused from school. These color-coordinated, flower-bearing "Singing Valentines" then flit from classroom to classroom, serenading students.

To ensure that each "mini capella group" blends together, singers must go through an audition process that matches them to the right quartet.

"The audition process is really fun and fairly low-stress. You sing the audition song, first in octets, and then

in quartets, walking around a chair and singing to current valentines, and then you do a short solo and deliver a pick-up line—which are usually really funny," Grace Abe, a senior who has sung in the program for two years, said.

Singing Valentines is a big favorite for many Lexington High School singers.

"I think the coolest part about Singing Valentines is that it brings the music department to the whole school. Even if you're not someone who regularly goes to see a cappella jams, or chorus concerts or jazz nights, chances are you're going to see a Singing Valentine in at least one of your classes," Abe said.

Performing in a Singing Valentines group can bring friends closer together.

"My favorite part about Singing Valentines is getting to sing with some of my closest friends, and also being able to interrupt classes," Stephanie Siracuse, a senior at LHS who has been a member of Singing Valentines for four years, said.

These light-hearted performances come at a particularly stressful time during the school year. By Valentine's Day, seniors are anxiously awaiting their regular decision results from colleges, and as students approach the home stretch of the school year, stress levels surrounding academics increase.

"I wanted to try out for Singing Valentines because I thought it was a great way to spread some love and laughs to your friends during a particularly tough time in the

school year," Siracuse said.

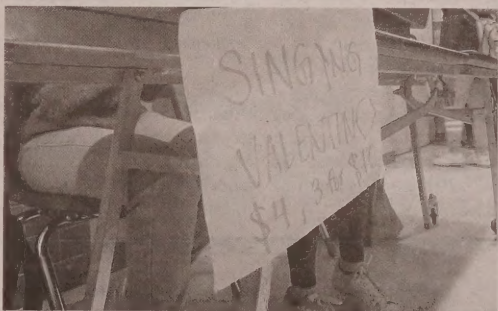
In order to spread the most joy possible, students are encouraged to buy Singing Valentines for people they care about.

"It's a very positive experience for everyone involved; it's fun to sing to people, it's fun to get sung to, and it's fun to watch someone in

your class get sung to," Abe said.

Although Singing Valentines can be hilariously awkward, the LHS community seems to embrace the unique experience.

"It may be awkward [in] the moment, but they will laugh about it later," Siracuse said.



Staff photo edited by Kelly Hui
Students bought Singing Valentines in Commons I.

Community service is more than just a graduation requirement

■ Victor Chen
Vani Sharma
Staff Writers

For many Lexington High School students, community service is a 40 hour hindrance, a tedious box to check before graduation. But when students dive deep-

ly into service, it can be impactful and rewarding. We interviewed students who have used the LHS community service requirement as an opportunity to build relationships and learn outside of the classroom.

"I once worked with young Arab students in Israel. My

responsibility was to improve their school's learning environment, and to ensure the safety of the school. As I worked with the students, we talked with each other about the relationship we should have, and how interpersonal respect goes a long way during times when there is conflict in Israel."

-Sage Fabricant, a senior, volunteered in Israel.

"At the hospital, I helped various veterans with their activities, and engaged in thoughtful discussions with them about the way they were treated. It was my responsibility to keep them company... The importance of do-

ing community service really needs to be emphasized. I think it would be a good idea if teachers had students do classroom activities that require them to help someone in a specific way.

-Sabrina Quadir, a junior, volunteered at Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital in Bedford, MA.

Questions? Comments? Email us at musketnews@gmail.com

How do LHS students feel about faculty diversity? It's a mix.

It's incontrovertible that faculty diversity at Lexington High School lags behind student diversity: 2017-2018 data from the Massachusetts Department of Secondary Education show that 44.8% of the Lexington High School

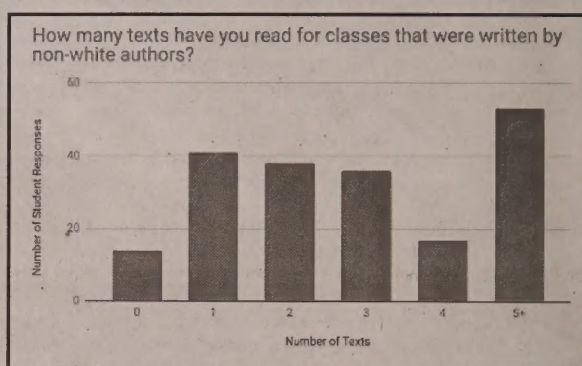
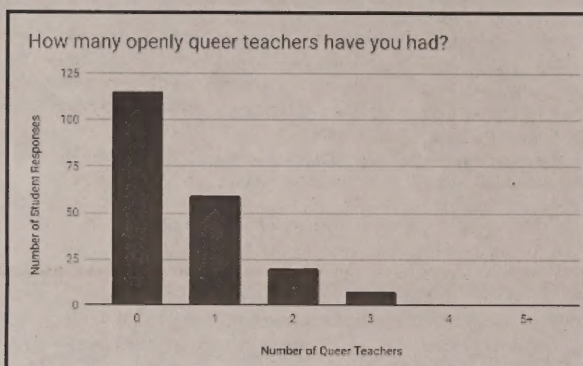
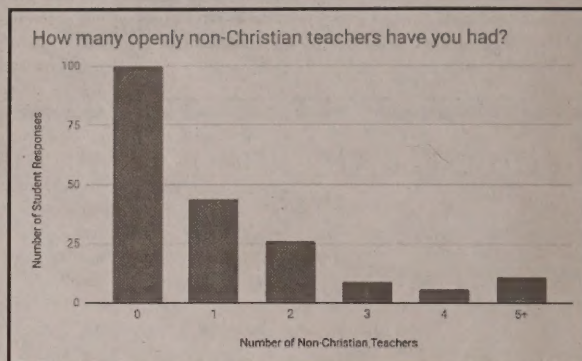
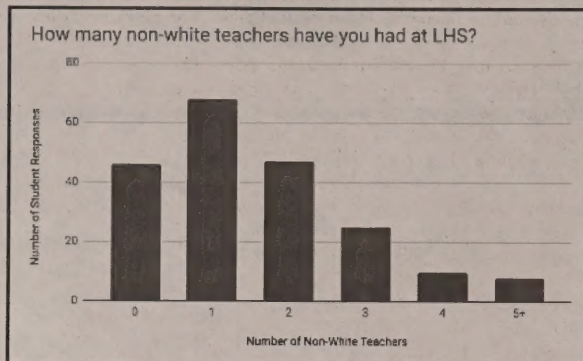
student body is composed of people of color. In contrast, according to information from Aspen, only 6.4% of the 342 active faculty is made up of non-white teachers.

What's less clear is how much that disparity matters.

Rather than take a specific stance, The Musket's editorial board asked students how they felt about the diversity of their teachers. In a survey distributed online, The Musket collected 204 responses, including students from all four

grades. The survey contained demographic questions about respondents' ethnic, gender and religious identities, and open-ended questions for respondents to give their opinions about faculty diversity. All students quoted gave on-

line consent to be quoted. 47.5% of the responses were from seniors, 22.1% from juniors, 17.2% from freshmen and 13.2% from sophomores.



Should the demographics of teachers match the demographics of students? Why or why not?

Is it important to you that your teachers reflect your background, identity or culture? Why or why not?

Can you reflect on a time when you connected to a teacher because of a shared element in your background, identity or culture? How did this affect your learning or your engagement?

"I believe that the most qualified person to teach should teach and it's my own responsibility to find people in the community who reflect me rather than them finding me," Nicolaes Anderberg, a sophomore, said.

"I'm Jewish, and there's definitely a lack of Jewish teachers, which is disheartening because I like to see role models that look like and live like me," Lily Lawrence, a ju-

nior, said.

"I feel that many teachers avoid these topics or just lightly touch upon them because they are 'uncomfortable' or 'taboo,' but this is toxic and doesn't work towards any solutions. However, if the facilitators of this discussion are all from the same demographic, there are no checks, and no differing perspectives," Jordan O'Hare-Gibson, a senior, said. "I would like to know

that at least some of the people I place my trust and academic future in can truly understand this."

"In an ideal world, the demographics of teachers could be even more diverse than the demographics of students. Kids don't really have a choice about what school they go to, so we don't have much of a choice about the diversity of the student body, but the school does decide who

they hire to teach, and therein have the opportunity to give all kinds of people jobs. We should have a diverse set of teachers because representation is so important. It shows people that they have options in life, that they are more than just stereotypes they've seen, and that they're not alone," Anne O'Donnell, a sophomore, said.

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Two steps forward, one step back: Why do hate crimes plague LHS?

■ Shweta Kondapi
Sports Editor

I take pride in being from Massachusetts. We made history as the first state to pass compulsory education laws, the first to uphold transgender rights at the ballot box and the first to introduce many other progressive reforms. Lexington embodies these ideals. Our community is always striving to be inclusive and welcome difference, such as Lexington High School's new Women's Literature class and the recent acknowledgement of more non-Christian holidays.

With all of these steps in the right direction, it is hard to understand why hate crimes continue to plague LHS. Swastikas have been found in bathrooms over the past two years. Last December, a poster in an LHS building was defaced with the N-word. And a few weeks ago, homophobic slurs were found on a school computer.

The growing frequency of hate crimes at LHS mirrors the rest of the country. President Donald Trump's racism and xenophobia catalyzed an increase in hate crimes. Statistics and incident reports indicate that implicit and explicit governmental endorse-

ments of discrimination have emboldened white nationalists. There is a certain comfort in seeing powerful people act with impunity: It gives other people a semblance of immunity that encourages them to commit similar crimes. Without repercussions, it's hard to crack that immunity. But so far perpetrators have stuck to almost untrackable offenses, which makes punishment impossible, only cementing the notion that hate crimes have no consequences.

Have hateful sentiments simply been latent, festering until our political climate made people comfortable enough to show their true col-

ors? An imagined lack of consequences may remove a deterrent, but it doesn't provide motivation; only preexisting bigotry would give people the idea in the first place.

I think, perhaps too optimistically, that LHS is not facing a sudden swell of prejudice; rather, there are a couple of insensitive kids motivated more by a desperate, stupid desire for attention than by any serious ideology. Drawing a swastika in a bathroom stall is an edgy, risky dare, something intended more for adrenaline and the titillating feeling of being bad than for making other students feel unsafe, even if that

is the result. If that's the case, then it's a mixed bag: On one hand, LHS would not be facing an epidemic of ingrained, zealous racism. On the other hand, the more LHS takes a stand against bigotry, the more these hate crime attention ploys might happen, because they get riskier and receive more recognition. That means we have to be smart. We have to tread a thin line: rejecting hate crimes in all instances while also not giving perpetrators the attention they clearly crave.

I don't even have the motivation to write this column

■ Jeffrey Gu
CollegeBored Columnist

We're DONE.

I was supposed to write another column here, but semester one is over now and I'm too lazy to care, so this is all you'll get for this edition. Maybe I'll have enough motivation to write more than two sentences next time. Bye!

...
Jk lol

But HEY! Guess what? By the time this column is published, you will officially be a second semester senior!

That's it. Goodbye. We're DONE.

We've been agonizing over applications for months now.

We've been working through our own college searches, exploring what defines us and trying to package and condense ourselves into a handful of activities and a few hundred words. We've researched colleges, drafted essays, revised openings, closings and everything in between, tailored our application to each school and maybe even copy-pasted a few essays from one college to another (shhhhhhh).

Now, the end has finally, finally arrived. We're done with the Common App, done with info sessions and college tours and CollegeBoard (but hopefully not CollegeBored!) We've braved all these obstacles, and now we're out of

that five month panic attack known as senior fall.

Whether you finished back in November, or you worked right up until 11:59 on Dec. 31, take a moment to pause. Breathe. Reflect on all that you've done and all the ground you've covered since your very first day of high school (oof frosh flashbacks). And if you're still feeling the aftereffects of that last-minute grind through quarter two and you're still carrying last-minute regrets over how you handled that essay or the grade you got on that last math test—let it go. Whatever you wrote and whatever you pulled together in that final stretch, now that everything is submitted, it's out of your hands.

It can definitely be scary, knowing that the merits of your four years of high school—essays, recommendations, transcripts, test scores, and all—are being evaluated by someone you've never met. But ultimately, we can't control how admissions officers will decide. Nothing that happens now can change what decision pops up in an applicant status portal a few weeks from now. So why stress more over it? All we have to do is live out our best high school lives and hope for as many snow days as possible, since we're not the ones who'll be making them up!

This bears repeating: YOU ARE A SECOND SEMESTER SENIOR. It's a bad

idea to throw all your studies completely out the window, but you no longer have to worry so much about how you do on that next essay, or whether you forgot to do the Spanish homework. If it's a choice between a night of studying and a night of sleep, pick sleep. There's no reason not to anymore. We only have a few short months left before we all go off on our own paths. Spend time with your friends. Do that thing you've been meaning to do but have been too busy to get around to. Enjoy the final stages of this chapter of your life—you deserve it.

The Harvard decision doesn't matter: Asian Americans lose

■ Sarah Liu
Columnist

The Harvard affirmative action trial offers no winning side for the Asian American community. Here's why.

Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard was a lawsuit filed against Harvard by the organization Students for Fair Admissions, which alleges that Harvard University discriminates against Asian Americans in their admissions process. Affirmative action was initiated in order to benefit minorities such as women and people of color, but SFFA is questioning whether Harvard's use of it violates the Civil Rights Act. Although the trial is specific to Harvard, its ruling could

affect the future of affirmative action in universities across America.

Asian Americans are undeniably disadvantaged by affirmative action. From 1995 to 2013, only 8.1% of Asian American applicants were accepted to Harvard, while 10.6% of Hispanic Americans, 13.2% of African Americans and 11.1% of white applicants gained admission. Asian Americans are the only group with an admission rate that dips below the 9.3% average for this time period.

Although Asian Americans are statistically the highest caliber students in more objective fields such as academics, standardized test scores and extracurricular activities, they fall behind as a group in the "personal score" cat-

egory. Scoring low on vague standards such as "likeability" and "courage" hurts their chances of gaining admission.

Despite Harvard's claims that admissions officials do not consider race while assigning personal scores, there is no explanation other than racial discrimination for Asian Americans consistently receiving lower personality scores. In 2013, Harvard conducted an internal investigation into its own admissions process and found that some bias against Asian American students indeed exists. However, these findings were never brought to the public, and no action was initiated to fix the problem.

Although the evidence of anti Asian American dis-

crimination is strong, the true agenda of Students for Fair Admissions is questionable. The founder of SFFA is Edward Blum, a white man who previously tried to dismantle affirmative action in order to benefit white students in the landmark case Fisher v. University of Texas. After his loss in Fisher, Blum's response was "I needed Asian plaintiffs." Additionally, the Trump administration has previously filed a statement supporting SFFA. Although "race-blind" admissions would doubtlessly help Asian applicants, it goes unsaid that white students would be Blum and Trump's intended beneficiaries, reducing opportunities for other minorities.

Surveys also show that Asian Americans are over-

whelmingly against the complete erasure of affirmative action, and feel that they are being used as pawns against other minorities. This is part of the myth of the model minority -- the way Asian American success is weaponized, used to deny racism and blame other racial minorities for their inability to overcome structural barriers.

No matter who wins SFFA v. Harvard, the Asian American community will lose. A triumph for Harvard would force Asian Americans to continue under the discriminatory status quo. If SFFA wins, Asian American students might see an increase in admission rates, but this could be a Pyrrhic victory, devaluing decades of civil rights progress.

We should accept the wall of rejection

■ Maia Hahn-Du Pont
Jake Fernandes
Staff Writers

It's the most stressful time of year—at least for students applying to college. Their biggest worry? Rejection from schools. And it just so happens that there has been an entire wall at Lexington High School dedicated to displaying rejection letters.

The Wall of Rejection is an integral part of LHS culture, but it's at risk. Profanity has long made it unpopular with the school administration, and it's easy to see how a wall of rejection letters could become toxic or disheartening. But that beat-up bulletin board is more than a rite of passage: it means the world to a huge part of the student body.

Every day, inspirational posters, painted rocks and

newsletters tell us that it's okay to fail. But we all know that's lip service: The material realities of high school—grading policies, GPA weighting and every agonizing moment of the college application process—make very clear that failure is unacceptable. The Wall of Rejection is the only forum where failure is confronted and redefined in a healthy way.

On the Wall of Rejection, fellow students comment silly or supportive things on anonymous rejection letters, in something akin to a virtual group hug.

"It's like this moment where people come together and support each other," Nerea Garcia-Mariscal, a senior, said.

In addition to enabling students to confront failure, the Wall of Rejection breaks down dangerous assumptions.

When we consume social media, we see carefully cultivated images of our peers' lives: we see them when they look their best, when they are happiest and when they are most successful. We seldom see our peers struggle, which makes many of us feel that we are dealing with our problems by ourselves, or that we are the only people doing with them. The Wall of Rejection protects anonymity but reminds us that we are not alone.

Most fundamentally, the Wall of Rejection deconstructs the fantasies and flawed assumptions we have about college: that everybody gets into their dream school, that only a certain tier or type of college is acceptable and that high school serves only as a stepping stone. Many freshmen come into LHS with a college already in mind, a GPA they can't envision fall-

ing below and impossible standards for themselves and their peers. It only gets worse as they become upperclassmen. By senior fall, college applications are all anybody talks about or thinks about. It's a consuming, damaging mindset that the Wall of Rejection helps cut back against, reminding us that we will be happy wherever we end up, and that a letter doesn't validate or invalidate our worth: "You are more than the college you attend" and "You will be happy wherever you end up" are common sentiments on the Wall. And in a process where students almost completely lack agency, the Wall of Rejection adds humor and a sense of reciprocity.

"The [Wall of Rejection] brings a comedic atmosphere to the stressful college decision process—there are a lot

of puns or jokes about the colleges and deans of admissions," Zach Hahn-Du Pont, an LHS graduate, said.

Yes, the comments can push the boundaries of what is school appropriate. And in recent years, ad hominem attacks, especially against legacy students, have worsened.

"The Wall [of Rejection] is meant for us to support each other, and we shouldn't use it to tear each other down," Yuliana Astorga-Licardie, a sophomore, said.

But even if we accept the inevitability of people misusing it, the Wall of Rejection helps far more than it harms. At the end of the day, it's voluntary and anonymous. And most of all, it is a physical representation of some of our school's best qualities: community, positivity and resilience.

Coffee and school? A perfect blend

■ Alexa Christ
Columnist

Amidst the many changes at Lexington High School, including later start times, longer classes and more regulated student parking, I have a productive suggestion: sell coffee at LHS.

It is scientifically proven that teenagers are biologically inclined to stay up late and sleep in. School disrupts this. As the new start time won't take effect for another two years, the remedy for many

students is coffee. LHS students can be found walking in packs, each holding their own cup: Dunkin' or Starbucks, paper-ensconced hot coffee or plastic-protected iced. Some of us even have double layered plastic styrofoam cups, all to preserve our precious drinks.

Having coffee available at the school itself will help kickstart the day for students and faculty. Our school is filled with a bunch of overworked and exhausted teenagers running on only a few hours of sleep. Now wave some coffee

in front of our faces and alertness would increase tenfold. Plus revenue would come pouring in! That's some real school spirit!

Let's be honest: Kids come into class late and we all know it's not because of car problems. It's because of the coffee in their hands. If coffee was sold at the high school, the number of tardies would decrease. It's a win-win for the students and the administration.

Once during my sophomore year, a senior came into class late with coffee for the

teacher and munchkins for the class. The teacher wasn't even mad, and how could he be? That senior was a hero; many of us were happy simply because we would be able to eat breakfast.

Other high schools have already started on the trend. Timber Creek High School in Fort Worth, Texas boasts a student-led coffee shop on school grounds. The students were involved with its planning and the menu. It was met with positive reviews.

The coffee shop at LHS could be student-run, just

like the school store. It would teach valuable business skills to students and could contribute to community service hours. The shop could sell breakfast foods which might also increase the likelihood that students eat a meal in the morning.

College campuses have also picked up on the coffee campaign; many college campuses sell branded coffee, like Starbucks, on campus for sleepy students. No LHS student would object to a Dunkin' Donuts just down the hall.

Another one rides the bus: New app promises to predict bus times

■ Vibhuti Naik
Rachel Zhang
Staff Writers

Thanks to John and Keena Gao, getting to that Monday A Block class might be a little bit easier.

John and Keena, two Lexington High School students, created the Ride on Time app, which enables mobile phones to track Lexington buses.

They came up with the idea in Nov. of 2017.

"I heard about a bus tracker device for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, a public transportation option in our area, and I wondered why our school buses did not have a similar application," Keena, a junior at LHS, said. Keena and her brother John then began researching similar apps and websites and reached out to Elaine Celi,

the Transportation Coordinator for Lexington. Celi maps out bus routes, which change every year based on evolving student needs.

This app differs from traditional software in its use of peer-to-peer communication.

"It maps out the movements of the bus that correspond to the students who are getting on the bus, so students waiting can see estimated time of arrival to their stop and get notifications before it arrives," Keena said.

The app was inspired by the Gaos' experiences waiting for the bus.

"We chose to create the app because we have experienced freezing mornings waiting for the bus since we were in elementary school. We were sick of not knowing where the bus was and whether or not it

would come, so we wanted to give students the ability to organize and figure out where the bus was through a group coordinated app," Keena Gao said.

The Gaos aren't alone in their sentiments.

"Yeah, I get cold in the mornings... It's the worst part of my day, and my friends and I always complain about it, but there was always nothing we could do," Ava Glavine, a freshman, said.

Creating an app like Ride on Time involves critical thinking and cost-benefit analysis.

"We debated pros and cons of certain functions and had to weigh what we really wanted to include in the app versus what we thought was extra," Keena said.

For many of the app's us-

ers, a major concern is the amount of data a peer-to-peer communication system might use.

"We would like to address the concern of data usage on our app and say that the only use of data is to send and receive coordinates of the bus, keeping the data usage to [a minimum]. In a month of daily usage, I only spent around 2MB," John said.

These young entrepreneurs have major plans.

"Our big dream? To eventually deliver our services to over 50 million kids in schools all over the United States. As a peer-to-peer system, Ride on Time Tech LLC is scalable because the focus is on the user who has the power to communicate with other students on their bus," Keena said.



Staff photo by Linda Kong
John and Keena Gao developed an app for fellow students.

LHS remembers Janet Haas

Rebecca Kielar
Editor-In-Chief
Narek Sahakian
A&E Editor

On Jan. 9, 2019, Lexington High School students, parents and faculty received the tragic news that orchestra director and music teacher Mrs. Janet Haas passed away peacefully at age 59 after a brief battle with brain cancer. Haas taught in all of the Lexington Public Schools for 31 years, becoming a pillar of the Lexington music program and influencing the lives of thousands of students, teachers and families.

When Haas first began teaching at LHS, the school had just one orchestra with only 17 string players. Through Haas' ambition and dedication, the high school music department now boasts three award winning orchestras of different levels, the largest alone comprising nearly 100 students.

Outside of LPS, Haas was an active member of multiple ensembles including La Dona Musicale and Boston Camerata, performing on both the bass and the viola da gamba. She also mentored graduate school students and taught private bass lessons.

Rachel Jayson, an orchestra

director at LHS who observed Haas as a part of graduate school training, always admired her energy and passion for sharing music with others.

"Janet was that very busy, very fast-moving woman with all of the photocopies going down the hall quickly... At any given time she had 250 students, 300 students, some insane number of students. And then multiply that by all these years," Jayson said.

Haas was a masterful teacher and mentor, spreading music at every public school in Lexington and educating students of every age group.

"I knew that every time I got to see her teach, I would learn something. And that was true until the last time I saw her teach and even beyond," Jayson said. "[She taught with] an intense amount of observation and incredibly high expectations from the beginning, and an incredible economy of language — she never said anything that didn't need to be said."

Through her enthusiasm, Haas inspired students to find deep appreciation for challenging repertoire.

"In a way, I owe my career to Mrs. Haas. I had been interested in conducting for most of my high school years, and when I was a senior, she was nothing but encourag-

ing to the extent of stepping off the podium and entrusting me with her orchestra," Aram Demirjian, a former student of Haas from the graduating class of 2004, said. "15 years later, I am a full time orchestra conductor, and it was Mrs. Haas [who] gave me that first opportunity, for which I will always be indebted to her."

Isabella van der Weide is a senior in the Symphony Orchestra who had Haas as a teacher since middle school.

"Mrs. Haas had a commanding presence as a teacher, but never in a way that made her feel distant or disconnected from the orchestra. Her explanations were always peppered with anecdotes from her daily life, and she had a rapport with a broad range of students," van der Weide said.

Haas' humility and generosity extended to her colleagues.

Allen Olsen, a musician and current math teacher at LHS, first met Haas in the Mystic Valley Chamber Orchestra when he was selected as their conductor in 1980.

"[Haas] was kind of shy, but really passionate about music," Olsen said. "She had a lot of energy that she put into [each orchestra] and got a lot out of the students."

Jeffrey Leonard, former Director of Performing Arts

at LHS, reflected on his long relationship with Haas.

"Janet was a woman of the highest personal integrity. She held herself, her students and her colleagues to the same high standards," Leonard said. "If a student or colleague were on the receiving end of one of her smiles when she squinted her eyes, and raised and nodded her head, they knew they had accom-

plished or achieved something special and important."

Jayson recounted a moment when Haas introduced one of Edward Elgar's Enigma Variations at a concert.

"Mrs. Haas said: 'I want you to imagine something very slow and very beautiful, like a sunrise that takes a long time to arrive and is there for a second, and then it's gone.'"



IN LOVING MEMORY OF
MS. HAAS

by Narek Sahakian

Lexington hosts conversation about race

Shweta Kondapi
Sports Editor
Jyothsna Bolleddula
Features Editor

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Lexington residents gathered in Grace Chapel for a discussion on racial issues.

The "Community Conversation on Race" was the first of a number of events held across Lexington to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

The event was led by Sean Osborne, the Chair of Lexington's Human Rights Committee.

"This discussion is about bringing conversation into action. We are not gonna solve racial equity questions today in Lexington. Maybe tomorrow, but not today," Osborne said.

The discussion began with a panel of speakers reading excerpts from King's writings and then detailing their own experiences with institution-

al racism and white privilege. State Representative Michelle Ciccolo was one of the members on the panel.

"Talking about race is never easy, and progress often comes from finding ourselves uncomfortable, squirming a bit as we endeavor to open our hearts and minds," Ciccolo said.

The panel also included students from Minuteman Career and Technical High School, who shared their experiences with racism in a school setting.

Emmanuel "Manny" Adey, a junior at Minuteman, described his encounters with a counselor who refused to let him take higher level math classes.

"I realized what my counselor meant when she said I wouldn't be able to fit in—she didn't believe in me just because of the color of my skin," Adey said.

Gabriel "Gabe" Andre, a recent graduate of Minuteman,

detailed his experience with the Lexington Police. Despite spending the majority of his life in Lexington, he has been pulled over three times in eight months.

"I wish it didn't feel normal to be questioned," Andre said.

Kaiaenteros Maracle, a senior at Minuteman, spoke third. She recounted her experiences telling people that she was Native American, and how they often reacted with disbelief. Although her experiences elicited gasps from the audience, she explained that she was no stranger to statements such as "How did you guys get so civilized?" and "You're so lucky you get to go to college for free."

Lexington High School PTO Co-President Christina Lin spoke to the audience about her experiences with how being Asian "is not white and therefore not the norm." She also acknowledged her privilege in regards to other

minorities.

"I've always viewed the law enforcement as my friend... looking back, I can see how I was complacent in my own privilege," Lin said.

The panel ended with a call to action.

"I wish that all of you out there in the audience will recruit, train, hire, connect, promote and advance minori-

ties and people of color to positions that you can impact," Ciccolo concluded.

All attendees then took part in small group discussions on civil discourse and potential solutions to racial inequity, such as increasing the diversity of public school teachers and implementing racial sensitivity training for the police force.



Staff photo by Megha Prasad
Michelle Ciccolo took part in the panel discussion of race.

Musician of the Issue: Catching a beat with Lucas Burkholder

■ Athena Li
Ilana Rosker
Staff Writers

Lucas Burkholder, a senior at Lexington High School, recently released an EP called "Unto You" in collaboration with fellow senior Trizzy Macc, available on platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music and Amazon.

Work on this EP started in April of 2018 when Burkholder, Trizzy and Nathan Ramesh, another musically savvy LHS senior, began to

make background tracks and lyrics. The first track on the album, "Remember," was recorded in a single day this summer. "Remember" also features Benjamin Maffia, a 2017 LHS graduate who raps and produces music under the name Bnaffs.

In addition to the EP, Burkholder has spent his years at LHS immersing himself in music: He participates in the elite Madrigal Singers chamber choir, the Rock Paper Scissors a cappella group and his own DJ company.

Burkholder credits a family

friend for introducing him to DJing and music production.

"My family friend was making beats on his computer when I was in eighth grade. I got the same software, FL studio, and I just started playing around with it," Burkholder said.

Burkholder's DJ business, LB Entertainment, performs at various functions including fundraisers, corporate events, bar and bat mitzvahs and proms. Most recently, Burkholder DJed Bedford High School's Junior Prom.

Burkholder hopes to further

his music career after graduation by pursuing a college major in music technology, production or audio-engineering. Additionally, Mac and Burkholder are in the process of

creating a second album.

More information on Burkholder's musical endeavors can be found on LBDJentertainment.com, a website he created himself.



Staff photos by Matt Pearlman
Lucas Burkholder DJ's at local events.

Artist of the Issue: Christine Wang draws praise with her art

■ Christina Li
Daisy Liu
Staff Writers

Some of us might doodle in class, but Christine Wang has taken it up a notch.

A junior at Lexington High School, Wang has been seriously pursuing art since freshman year. She mainly

works with digital illustration tools and two-dimensional mediums such as oil paint, watercolor, colored pencil and charcoal.

Wang already boasts some serious accolades: She won the 2017 Congressional Art Competition; her award-winning self-portrait hung in the U.S. Capitol for a year. This year, she received an Honor-

able Mention in the prestigious 2019 National YoungArts Foundation competition.

Wang hopes to express her own experiences through art, which she sees as an unparalleled medium for conveying perspective.

"You don't need to learn how to understand art like you do with language. I can utilize certain visual patterns and symbols to communicate ideas and connect with others in ways that I think resonate much deeper within people than language can," Wang said.

For Wang, art and life augment each other.

"I often draw or paint realistically and will use references such as photographs or direct observations from real life. I've learned to look for

certain details and patterns within these references... [and] I've started to subconsciously notice these patterns in my day-to-day life," Wang said.

However, Wang thrives on the unfamiliar, rather than the quotidian.

"I'm often most creative when I have some prompt or scene to base my thinking [on]. This helps me explore more new and unfamiliar ideas instead of defaulting to things I'm used to creating art about. I love going to art museums whenever I travel and seeing the way other artists think through the artistic choices they make," Wang said.

Despite her success, Wang faces artistic and creative challenges.

"I used to suffer from real-

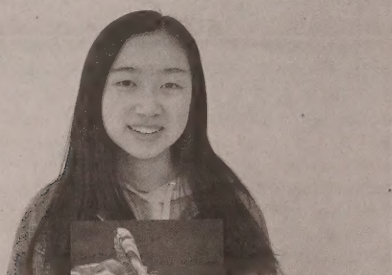
ly bad artist's block. It would become really frustrating at times and make me question whether I actually enjoyed making art," Wang said.

Wang reflected on her evolution as an artist.

"Now, I'm a lot more open-minded and I take a lot more risks in my art. I've learned that I should figure out what art means to me personally rather than let someone else define it for me," Wang said.

She can say with confidence that art, in some form, will be a part of her future.

"I feel like I've been doing art for so long that it's become too entangled with my life to imagine a future without it. Even if I end up on a different [career] path, I know I'll always be creating it and appreciating it," Wang said.



Staff photos by Shweta Kondapi
Pictured above is artist and junior Christine Wang.

I love The Bachelor and I'm not ashamed to admit it

■ Clare Wiesen
News Editor

Content Warning: Mentions of sexual assault

Anyone who knows me knows that I'm a huge fan of *The Bachelor*. I started watching in 2014 when Juan Pablo was the titular Bachelor. Curiously enough, fans of the show almost unanimously agree that he is the worst bachelor in the history of the show, so it's a wonder that I kept watching. That's the problem with the Bachelor franchise: They really know how to hold on to their viewers. Once you watch one season of *The Bachelor*, you'll get sucked into watching the next few seasons, and then you'll start *The Bachelorette*, and then if you're really down

the rabbit hole, you'll get to Bachelor in Paradise, my favorite of the three.

After watching the show devotedly for a couple years, one could say that I'm pretty invested, or at least more invested than I should be. When Colton Underwood was announced as the Bachelor for the current season, I had my doubts. I had seen him in *The Bachelorette*, and then on Bachelor in Paradise, and maintained a less than favorable opinion. But now that I am four episodes into his season, I can say that I'm actually okay with him.

Even though Colton can be straight-up stupid sometimes with how he handles women, and the constant discussion of his virginity is exhausting, he's entertaining to watch. And he has successfully con-

vinced the audience—including me—that he genuinely wants to find love and a wife. Is it absolutely crazy to think that you could find someone to marry out of approximately 30 women on a TV show in just six weeks? Of course. Do I hope he can do it? Yes.

In the fourth episode of this season, *The Bachelor* had a first. On her one-on-one date, Caelynn opened up to Colton about how she was drugged and raped by men she knew during her sophomore year of college. I was aware of her experience going into the episode, as I found footage of her speaking about the assault at the 2018 Miss USA Pageant, but hearing her on the show was still shocking and inspiring. Especially considering the allegations of sexual misconduct between contestants

on season four of *Bachelor in Paradise*, it was refreshing to hear someone speak so candidly and openly about the issue.

Surprisingly, my favorite part of watching the show isn't what's on my television screen. While I love it when someone is sent home on a one-on-one date or when Colton cries (sorry not sorry), my favorite part is watching the Instagram stories of former contestant Wells Adams and his girlfriend Sarah Hyland. Yes, someone who was on *The Bachelorette* and *Bachelor in Paradise* is currently dating the actress who plays Haley on *Modern Family*, and it's amazing. The pair watches every episode together, and Adams uses his behind-the-scenes knowledge to make their stories that much

funnier. They also have a cute dog who regularly appears in the videos, which doesn't hurt.

While there are still many more episodes to come, season 23 of *The Bachelor* is shaping up to be a good one. Although host Chris Harrison always says that the current season is the craziest one yet, in this case, he might actually be right. Will Colton lose his virginity in the fantasy suite? Will Cassie ever get more screen time? Will politics ever be mentioned? To get answers, I'm going to have to keep watching -- except the last question, which I can answer right now. No, politics will never be mentioned, not even a little bit.

35 global songs to try!

Papaoutai -- Stromae (French)
 Inachevés -- Casseurs Flowters (French)
 Ne Regrette Rien -- Edith Piaf (French)
 La Bohème -- Charles Aznavour (French)
 Nagada Sang Dhol -- Shreya Ghoshal (Hindi)
 Kuch Kuch Hota Hai -- Udit Narayan, Alka Yagnik (Hindi)
 Chammak Challo -- Hamsika Iyer, Akon (Hindi)
 Havana/Bom Diggy/Main Tera Boyfriend -- Penn Masala (Hindi/English/Spanish)
 Melted -- Akdong Musician (Korean)
 Dance -- offonoff (Korean)
 BANG BANG BANG -- bigbang (Korean)
 Lomir sich iberbetn -- Zupfgeigenhansel (Yiddish)
 Ihiye Beseder -- Café Shahor Hazak (Hebrew)
 Mesiba Be'Haifa -- The Ultras and Italy Levi (Hebrew)
 Antes de las Seis -- Shakira (Spanish)
 Sensualidad -- Bad Bunny (Spanish)
 Te boté -- Nio García (Spanish)

Vivir mi Vida -- Marc Anthony (Spanish)
 Color Esperanza -- Diego Torres (Spanish)
 Me niego -- Reik, Ozuna, Wisin (Spanish)
 Solita -- Ozuna (Spanish)
 El Préstamo -- Maluma (Spanish)
 Llegaste tu -- CNCO (Spanish)
 Chong Ai -- TFBoys (Mandarin)
 Familia -- Nicki Minaj, Anuel Aa, & Bantu (Spanish and English)
 Zu Asche zu Staub -- Babylon Berlin (German)
 Papa l'americano -- Yolanda Be Cool (Italian)
 #1 Spice -- Young Cardamom & HAB (Kanda and English)
 Seasons -- Mozzy, Sjava and Reason (English and Zulu)
 Come and see my moda -- MzVee ft Yemi Alade (Afrobeat)
 African Beauty -- Diamond Platnumz ft. Omarion (Swahili and English)
 'Lova Lova' -- Tiwa Savage (Afrobeat- from Nigeria)
 Nterini -- Fatoumata Diawara (Bambara)
 Deran Deran Alkheir -- Bombino (Tuareg)

Meet the winners of the LHS Concerto Competition

■ Ollie Rourke
 Varun Suraj
 Staff Writers

The three winners of the Lexington High School Concerto Competition are being given the unique opportunity to play as soloists with the Chamber Orchestra, the highest level orchestra at LHS.

The competition was evaluated by three judges: Omar Chen Guey, a violinist in the music group A Far Cry; Yun Lee, a pianist from Winchester Music School; and David Hoose, a conductor and director of orchestra activities at Boston University.

One of the three winners of the competition is senior Alex Tung, who plays the trumpet. Tung chose his own piece for his performance.

"I chose the piece 'Legend' by Georges Enesco. It's not strictly a concerto, but it's a very technically demanding and beautifully written piece of music for trumpet, which I hoped would show off my technical ability on my instrument," Tung said.

Tung has been playing the

trumpet for nine years, beginning when he was in fourth grade.

"I love making music," Tung said. "I especially love the reactions and the emotions that I evoke in my audience members."

Hannah Ryu, also a senior at LHS, was another winner of the competition. She describes this year's competition as more competitive.

"There was even a preliminary round just this year because there were too many applicants," Ryu said. "The preliminary round was sending a three minute recording of the piece that each person wants to play for the competition."

Although Ryu also plays the piano, she entered the competition as a violinist. She had previously won the competition as a freshman.

"I played the first movement of the Saint-Saëns Violin Concerto No.3 in B minor for the competition. I chose this piece because I like how it is bold, energetic and romantic all at the same time despite being French music, which is usually considered to be deli-

cate. In playing this piece I've learned to play aggressive and fast passages with greater sensitivity," Ryu said.

Ryu began playing the violin when she was four years old, and her passion for music has grown since.

"I believe music is a universal language," Ryu said. "Through international music tours and performances at various places, including hospitals, I've learned that music can really connect and console all people despite their physical, cultural, or financial condition."

Khoi Le, a sophomore at LHS, plays the piano and also won the concerto competition.

"The piece I performed was the first movement of Rachmaninoff's 2nd Concerto... It's a dark, exhilarating piece that can be interpreted in so many ways. I chose it not only because of its technical difficulty, but because of the number of times it's been played. I wanted to find something different in it that hadn't been discovered before and present my new take on it to audiences," Le said.

Le has been playing piano since he was five years old, but said his true passion was sparked in middle school.

"What keeps me playing is my desire to share classical music with people who don't know the beauty of classical repertoire, as well as the rush I get when performing, which is unlike [any] other," Le said.

Ryu will play in April, Tung will play in May and Le will play in October as soloists with the LHS Chamber Orchestra.



Staff photo by Anya Ghali
 Sophomore Khoi Le was one of the winners of the Concerto Competition.

Athlete of the Issue: There's no stopping Stump

■ Claire Pak
Staff Writer

If anyone's going to get a three pointer in soccer or a home run in basketball, it's Elizabeth Stump. As a junior, Stump is already a member of three varsity teams at Lexington High School: soccer, basketball and softball.

Managing just one season of varsity athletics can be difficult, given rigorous daily practice and game schedules.

For Stump, that means time management is a crucial challenge.

"I learned early that it is so important to utilize my time in school so that outside of school I have time for my sports, friends and family," Stump said. "I have to make sure I have my pri-

orities straight, while giving each important part of my life some of my time."

Stump started early. She has played soccer and softball for twelve years, and basketball for ten. She attributes some of her success to her athletic family and the high school players she worked with as an elementary and middle school student.

"I don't think I look up to anyone in particular as a role model. I know that when I was a young kid and I went to the clinics led by the high school players, I would always see them and think that I wanted to be like them," Stump said. Now a mentor to younger athletes, it's seems like she's come full-circle.

Despite the physical and mental challenges of playing varsity sports for the entire

school year, being a member of three separate teams has been gratifying for Stump, and has taught her important lessons about failure and teamwork.

"Playing three sports has been an amazing part of my life. I walk down the main hall and am able to say 'Hi' to so many people because of the bonds I have made with my teammates. If I didn't play sports, I would know a lot fewer people," Stump said.

Stump's motto might be "Work hard, play hard."

"It can be really easy to get caught in the monotony of working out every day and prepping for the season, but when a person has fun they perform their best," Stump said.



Staff photos by Kelly Hui

Pictured above is tri-varsity athlete and junior Elizabeth Stump.

There's no arguing the debate team's success

■ Bryant Xia
Samiha Kazi
Staff Writers

With more than 40 consecutive state titles, Lexington High School's debate team boasts what LexDebate lovingly refer to as "Lexington hegemony."

The LHS debate team competes in policy, Lincoln-Douglas and public forum styles and represents the school in tournaments throughout the nation.

The winning tradition has continued this academic year, especially at the Newark Invitational, where the team managed to close out finals in both novice and varsity policy divisions. At the same tournament, the Novice Lincoln-Douglas team won the final

as well. Additionally, nine out of the top fifteen recognized speakers at the tournament were from Lexington.

The pinnacle of high school debate is the Tournament of Champions (TOC), which many debaters spend years trying to reach. To qualify, debaters must reach certain elimination levels at highly competitive national tournaments and receive "bids." This year, seniors Talia Blatt and Debayan Sen qualified for the TOC in policy by December, and juniors Evan Li, Simran Gandhi, and Avery Fortier have received bids in Lincoln-Douglas. Additionally, in February, Blatt and Sen won the prestigious Harvard tournament with an undefeated record, receiving a third TOC bid.

Behind these achievements

are hours of preparation which include research, practice rounds and drills.

"We all divide up the work so we see which schools are going to a tournament and research all the [arguments they make]. Then we make things called case negs which are like responses to other teams' arguments," Emily Qiu, a junior and third year policy debater, said.

This preparation also requires extensive research on current events.

"Debaters pay special attention to the current events in the world, monitoring the most [important] political situations that can be used in their arguments," Larry Lin, a sophomore policy debater, said.

As much as debate is about research and technical ar-

gumentation, it is also about persuasive, presentational speech. Debaters aim to increase their speed, clarity, and enunciation.

"In policy debate especially, speaking drills aim to allow debaters to convey as many of their points in the time limit given to them without sacrificing clarity. These drills can involve reading backwards, saying words such as 'watermelon' between each word in

a text, or even speed reading, or spreading, with a pen in one's mouth," Lin said.

It's a lot of work and time, but participants are driven by love for the activity.

"I enjoy debate because it gives me an opportunity to learn about topics that I normally might not look into, but also topics that are extremely important and controversial today," Qiu said.



Photo courtesy of Kelly Hui

Varsity debaters Ashlan Ahmed and David Cai flex their debate muscles.

Hello, faithful Musketeers!

Want to see even more Musket content? Check out our freshly updated website: <https://musketnews2.wixsite.com/lexmusket> (not to be confused with <http://www.lexmusket.com/>, which is now retired.)

If there is a subject you're hyped to read about, fill out the "Story Ideas" survey located under the CONTACT section of our new website, and we'll do our best to cover it!

Stay warm as winter comes to a close!

Your Editors-in-Chief, Rebecca and Talia